Shortage of funds in foreign missions

2035. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "MEA slammed as expenses on foreign missions shoot up" appearing in the 'Indian Express', dated 2nd May, 2001 according to which there was a shortage of funds for some categories of expenses, while funds under other heads were not spent properly; and

(b) if so, Government's views and reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The budget for Embassies and Missions abroad is as follows:—

2000-2001 (Revised Estimates)	Rs. 727.012 crores
2001-2002 (Budget Estimates)	Rs. 756.085 crores

The increase in Budget Estimates for the current Financial Year over the last year's revised estimates is largely on account of salary fixation and increase in office expenses generally due to exchange rate fluctuations. Based on feed back from Missions, increases wherever warranted have been made to meet functional requirements e.g. towards publicity expenses both in the Missions' budget and also in the Ministry's budget. Whenever shortage on account of increased and important activity in specific missions have been reported, these have been met through reappropriation by effecting savings elsewhere.

Report regarding Pattern of Global Terrorism

2036. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the report "Pattern of Global Terrorism" released by the U.S. State Department;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) how far Government interact with that country on the question of international terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Government has seen the U.S. Department of State's annual report on Patterns of Global Terrorism for 2000, which was released in April 2001.

(b) Government has noted that the report recognises, *inter alia,* that the trend of terrorism shifting from the Middle East to South Asia has continued; that the Taliban continues to provide safe haven for international terrorists; that the Pakistan's Military Government continued previous Pakistani Government support of the Kashmir insurgency; and, that the United States remains concerned about reports of continued Pakistani support for the Taliban military operations in Afghanistan. Government has also noted the list of designated "Foreign Terrorist Organisations", which includes groups such as Harkat ul Mujahideen, Al Qaida and the LTTE, and the list of "Other Terrorist Groups", which includes Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

(c) India and the United States have established a India-U.S. Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism to intensify their bilateral cooperation and work together to advance international cooperation, including in the United Nations, to combat international terrorism.

Gas pipeline from Iran to India

2037. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government would not consider laying a gas pipeline from Iran to India through Pakistan for National Security reason;

(b) whether it has now been reported that Government have made a U-Turn in its policy and are agreeing to route the gas pipeline through Pakistan; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for this change in policy and what arrangements would be made to ensure the security and efficiency of the system?